

were strong attractions, the Moon Dear ballad of Miss Young making a specially big hit, while the scenery, the dressing, and mounting generally were on an exceptionally high level of excellence.

When the Royal Comic Opera Company takes wing, it always supplies an instance of the large amounts which Mr J. C. Williamson pays out, as a matter of course, for travelling expenses. Their present trip to New Zealand, a company of 90, will cost for the round trip from Melbourne to Wellington through that colony and back to Sydney considerably over £2000 in fares alone, without reckoning in the expenditure on freight by steam and rail for scenery and baggage. It is safe to say that no other manager in the world would have to spend such a large sum for the sake of sending a single company for a three months tour of a country boasting less than a million inhabitants. The company opened in Wellington in "The Orchid," as the fore-runner of a repertoire which includes such favourites as "The Country Girl," "The Cingalee" and "La Mascotte."

Mr Julius Knight now en route for Australia via the United States, spent a fortnight or so in New York, looking round and paying particular attention to the manner in which the American stage managers produce their plays. While there he had an opportunity of seeing Mr Kyrle Bellew starring in "The Exploits of Brigadier Gerard," one of the four new plays Mr Knight brings with him to Australia. In two of the others—"Robin Hood" and "Raffles"—Mr Knight has already seen Mr Lewis Waller and Mr Gerald du Maurier in the leading characters, so that he has been able to compare his prospective interpretations of the part with those of players already familiar with them, and such a comparison is always a valuable aid to an actor.

Nothing that has hitherto been staged in Australia has approached in wealth of scenic effect and artistic mounting the production of "Parsifal," by Mr J. C. Williamson at Her Majesty's Theatre, Sydney (says Mr Tallis), and the crowded audience who lavishes unstinted applause upon one beautiful spectacular effect after another, evidently fully recognised the extraordinary pains that had been taken to make the interpretation of the nobly conceived play complete at all points. It was a notable triumph for Australian dramatic enterprise, and Mr Williamson was most cordially congratulated on all hands for the perfect success he had made of it. Not only was the mounting so noteworthy but the acting generally was



MASTER FRED BYRON, the boy vocalist appearing at the Opera House.

well worthy of the setting. Miss Tittell Brune won success as Kundry, her reading of the character being marked by poetic insight and dramatic instinct, while Mr Thomas Kingston as Parsifal the saintless hero Mr Gaston Mervale as the magician Klingsor, and others in the cast gave her entirely adequate support.

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The Waldron-Humphries Dramatic Company commenced a season at Christchurch at Christmastime after a very successful visit to Dunedin. It is Mr Williamson's intention that while they are at Christchurch they shall do "Cigarette," the dramatisation of Ouida's "Under Two Flags," which they get ready before leaving Sydney. They follow the Royal Comic Opera Company at Wellington.

The season of "Mother Goose" in Melbourne cannot last beyond the second week in February, for at that date Her Majesty's Theatre will be occupied by Mr Julius Knight and his company. A Sydney season will therefore be undertaken, which, in all probability will last until Easter.

Some time next week, Mr Julius Knight may be expected to be back in Australia once more, and he will of course proceed straight to Melbourne to begin work on "Robin Hood." About that play he writes to Mr J. C. Williamson in the most enthusiastic strain. He saw its debut in London, and watched its great and growing success with the public, and every day convinced him more and more not only of the fine possibilities of his own part, but also of the attractiveness of the romantic play itself. Certainly everything is in favour of its being exceptionally well staged and played in Australia. Not only did Mr. Knight's company see the London production before leaving England, but they were also measured and fitted with their costumes in exact replicas of those worn by Mr. Lewis Waller's company. Mr. Knight himself brings with him all the working models of scenery and appointments and a thorough knowledge of the stage management for it. "Robin Hood," as in other plays of his repertoire, he intends to be his own producer, and to stage them all on the lines of the London representations.

Thousands of his admirers throughout Australasia will be glad to know that Mr Andrew Mack, the popular Irish American singing comedian who has already an enviable reputation out here, is returning in a few months to fill another engagement with Mr J. C. Williamson, with a new company and a repertoire of new pieces.

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